

unloading of his three wagons, when ever it was necessary to cross a stream, which frequently happened.

The whole caravan of wagons, cattle, oxen, horses, mules left Sante Fe in good condition; but the number that reached the Missouri River, was not so large—the oxen and cattle died from thirst, the horses and mules became exhausted and were left—and disease did the business for the men in some cases. It was a hard journey, and one that I never cared to repeat. Yet, it has always appeared to me, that the barren country, east of the Canadian River, would at some day, prove valuable. It is rich in minerals. The ground in some places was covered with pieces of a crustated substance, that tasted like saleratus. There were several springs of a volcanic nature.

From the merchant, whose name was Campbell, I learned much of Mexico, its climate, products, people and geography. He had been down the Del Norte, and into the interior as far as Sonora, where he married the daughter of a Mexican. I took great pleasure in hearing this man talk, and probably I gained more knowledge of Mexico from his conversation, than in any other way.

It was October before we got to Saint Louis, which place I saw for the first time, and Campbell having no further need of my services, paid me in hard Mexican dollars, and I left him.

Having now been absent from home about six years, and possessing the means to carry me back, I was tempted to return. But chance threw me into the society of a person named Knox, a mason by trade, who persuaded me to follow the same business. Being naturally of a mechanical turn, I was soon able to earn fair wages. I worked steadily at the mason work and at brick laying, for fifteen months, at the end of which period I was dubbed a mason, and could also do a passable job of plastering—the last accomplishment stood me in pretty well, when Fort Crawford was built.

It was in the year 1825 that I had heard of Prairie Du Chien, and made up my mind to see the country in that direction. But before proceeding to give you an account of the early